

Preparing to Run a Badminton Tournament



Whether you're hosting a tournament at a school or local gym, you'll need to be organized weeks ahead of time to ensure that everything runs smoothly. Nothing will scare players away more than a disorganized tournament. There are many detail-oriented aspects of running a tournament, and much of it deals with preparation. This guide will go over everything you need in order to be prepared when the action begins.

Find a Facility

Before you get down to the nitty-gritty details, you need to find a place to host the tournament. If you're associated with a school, the gym should be available to reserve for a fundraising event. If you're not associated with any gyms, it'll be tough to find a reasonably priced facility to hold a tournament. Normally, the fees to rent out a third-party gym will negate any profits you were hoping to make, so it's best to avoid this situation if possible.

When you've settled on a gym you must assess the resources available to you. Things to take note of are:

- **Number of courts:** The amount of courts you have will ultimately determine how big of a tournament you can host. The bare minimum should be 8 courts, but 12 courts or more is ideal.
- **Seating space:** Determine how much room you will have to seat both spectators and competitors awaiting matches. Floor space can be included as long as it isn't uncomfortably close to a court. If you're unsure about floor space, you'll need at least five feet between the seats and the court.
- **Resources available:** A public-address system (or a microphone with a sound system) is an invaluable resource for a tournament of any size. A huge part of staying organized is making sure competitors get to their assigned court and play as promptly as possible. There is no easier way to announce matches than using a PA system. Additionally, things like chairs and tables are essential, but should be relatively easy to get.

Determine the Tournament Style and Size

The style of your tournament will be determined by how much time and court space you have. Typically, a tournament will run anywhere from 8 to 24 hours, spanning over one or two days. Consolation style offers the best value for players, while single-elimination will finish the quickest. Round-robin is easily the most time consuming and should only be reserved for flights with five teams or less.

The size of a tournament refers to the amount of players participating. More specifically, it refers to the size of the bracket. A bracket displays the head-to-head format typically used for tournament-style play. It also depends on what flights and events you are running. Having more than one flight will drastically increase the size of your tournament, since players will likely sign up for two flights. If you estimate each match to take occupy 30 minutes of court time, you should be able to estimate the amount of matches you can run in a given day.

Determine the Prizes and Prices

Everyone loves prizes, and badminton players are no exception. Having trophies and cash prizes are a great way to attract players. However, be wary of making promises you can't keep. Offering cash as a prize will eat into your profits and should be carefully planned out before you make the final call. If you opt to hand out trophies, be sure to order them at least a month in advance to ensure that they arrive in time. Communicating with the distributor will also give you a more specific timeframe of when you can expect the shipment to arrive.

The entry fee is entirely up to you, but it should at least produce a profit for your team, charity, etc. Most tournaments offer a discount for entering in two or more events. Another great way to gain more profit is by making tournament shirts available for purchase. This should be taken care of a few weeks in advance if you plan on making shirts.

Advertise the Tournament

Before you can run a tournament, you need to get participants to sign-up. There are three main ways to announce your tournament to the badminton community:

- **Mailing list:** Sending out mass emails is the most common and convenient way to reach the local badminton population. You can obtain mailing lists by contacting any of the tournament directors from past tournaments you've competed in and seeing if they are kind enough to lend you their list.
- **Online announcement:** If you can't get a hold of mailing lists from other directors, perhaps they can announce it on their websites. A good alternative is posting on active badminton forums as long as it reaches the local community.
- **Posting on bulletin boards:** As a last resort, posting on bulletin boards and using word-of-mouth can attract players. Going to badminton gyms and posting flyers is a good start. Always be sure to ask permission before posting anything in a public facility.

Obtain Waiver and Registration Forms

It's a tedious task, but an absolute must for any sporting event. A waiver form basically frees your organization from being liable for any injuries that players may sustain during your event. You may have come across one of these waiver forms in order to allow you to take part in a previous tournament. What the players (or their parents) are saying by signing one of these forms is that they cannot (and will not) file a lawsuit against you, the operator, or the gym in the event of an injury. To obtain a waiver form, ask either the school that you attend or the gym that you

are renting. The folks in charge should be familiar with these documents and they should be able to answer any specific questions you may have regarding these forms.

Registering online is most convenient for both you and the participants. Either setup a website for players to register or provide them with an email address to contact you. The following is information you will need from each participant:

- First and last name
- Phone number and email address
- Gender
- Events and flights playing
- Partner name (if applicable)
- Team or club association

Create the Brackets



For tournaments with at least 32 players or teams, you should dedicate an entire day to constructing the brackets and organizing match cards. Teams need to be checked for anyone skipping flights or playing with incorrect partners. Also, be sure to avoid matching up players against any other teams from the same school or club. After the brackets are created, match cards need to be created and organized in a logical manner.

Number the matches to run alternating flights and avoid stalling. For example, many players will be playing C and D flights, which would make it sensible to run B and D flight matches consecutively. This will prevent players from having to be on two courts at the same time.

Assemble Teams and Stations

There are many things to consider when putting together the staff for a tournament. First, you should create tasks or stations for teams to manage. Ideally, you'll want the following at your tournament:

- **Registration desk:** Registration can be a pain, so keeping two to three people at the registration desk at all times will help the process run smoothly. Allow at least an hour for players to register before a tournament.
- **Tournament desk:** This is where the matches will be announced and where the brackets will be updated. This station should be split into two teams, with one managing the games on the court and the other updating the brackets for the tournament.
- **Miscellaneous:** Running a tournament can be chaotic, so having a team on hand to take care of any small tasks is absolutely vital. Communicating with the facility staff and managing court times are among the issues that may arise.

Don't Refuse Help

You can't be too sure of anything when dealing with a tournament. No detail is too small. The better prepared you are, the easier it is to run the actual tournament. The one thing you should avoid in all this detail-oriented chaos, is trying to do everything by yourself. Even though all duties are relatively straightforward, there are many individual tasks that come with running a tournament. Never be afraid to ask for help. Trust your team to help you and you'll thank yourself in the end.